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ABSTRACT

An exhaustive analytic review of large bodies of research indicates that rates of premarital intercourse among teenagers have risen sharply since 1966. This is particularly true for white females, for whom the rate is probably about three times that of the 1920's thru the mid-1960's; for white males the rate seems to have risen about 50%. By age 17 or 18, rates for white males and females are about 40%; for black males, probably 95% and black females, about 70%. Premarital intercourse seems to be occurring earlier for both sexes and both races. A sharp decline in double standard attitudes and behaviors is noted. Most adolescents are not promiscuous; sex relations generally occur in an affectionate steady relationship. Only about 15% of sexually active teen-agers appeared to use effective contraceptives consistently (as of 1972). Higher incidence of premarital intercourse, improved physical health, earlier maturation, poor contraceptive practice, and a drop in the early marriage rate probably account, to a large extent, for rising rates of out-of-marriage births to adolescents. Several factors account for the far higher illegitimacy rates among blacks: less use of abortion and effective contraceptives, and fewer forced marriages. (Author)

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# POSSIBLE FACTORS ASSOCIATFD WITH HIGH RATES OF OUT-OF-MARRIAGE BIRTHS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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# POSSIBLE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH RATES OF OUT-OF-MARRIAGE BIRTHS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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## Introduction

The possible factors associated with adolescent out-of-marriage births are both simple and complex, but that's the way sex is and therein lies its endless allure.

Probably any teenager could tell us that out-of-marriage births are caused by intercourse together with insufficient contraceptive protection, lack of abortion and failure to marry. Only, of course, the teenager would use shorter and more expressive words.

Simple as this diagnosis is, much has been learned by researchers - and much more waits to be learned - about the who's, when's, why's and effects of adolescent coitus, contraceptive and abortion use or non-use; marriage or lack of it; and the outcomes of adolescent childbearing.

A recent rise in the rates of adolescent childbearing outside of marriage provides the immediate, practical reason for interest in this topic by policy-makers, human service programmers, and researchers. Of course the matter is of supreme interest to the adolescents involved, as well as their children. Learning more about the causes of this trend should be of pragmatic use. It is also of interest to behavioral scientists who seek to learn more about human behavior. Knowledge and theory building about adolescent sexuality should help us understand more about many aspects of adolescence: a subject that is seriously under-researched.

This paper is based on a much larger report currently in preparation under a contract with the Behavioral Sciences Branch, Center for Population Research, NICHD Contract # NO1-HD-52821.

Adolescent childbearing should not be regarded in the narrow frame-work of certain aspects of specific sex behavior. For practical, humane, and scientific reasons it should be considered in the broad context of all the social, psychological and biological aspects of human sexuality at a particular stage of male and female development.

This context includes the physical capacities, knowledge, attitudes, values, feelings and goals that young people bring to their sexual behavior as masculine or feminine persons. It includes, then, their developing sense of sex and gender identity; their view of themselves as individuals in relation to significant others in the past, present and future as well as their interaction with the larger world of school, work and community in the particular moment of history in which they are living.

It is impossible to adequately discuss all aspects of adolescent sexuality in the present paper. Despite my plea for a broader approach to the subject, it becomes necessary to focus on a narrower topic: attitudes and behaviors of adolescents in respect to premarital relationships with persons of the opposite sex. Because of space limitations lesser emphasis is placed in contraceptive use and non-use. The material that follows is largely based on a review and analysis of related research. Conclusions are highly tentative because, for the most part, studies in the field are unsatisfactory. The majority use small local, inadequately defined samples. Questionnaires vary from study to study and frequently lack tests of reliability and validity. Statistical analysis is often inadequate. We particularly lack sufficient data regarding the sex behavior of males and of black adolescents.

Studies tend to be descriptive and few are based on coherent theory. Aside from the research of Jessor and Jessor (1975) Miller (1974) and Cvetkovich and Grote (1976), few systematically explore psychological variables in any depth. Although a number have a sociological focus, explorations of the relationship

between socio-economic status and sexual attitudes and behavior are largely unsatisfactory because of insufficiently precise difinitious of this status.

Despite these limitations a number of interesting findings emerge that provide partial knowledge and point the way for further research.

Teenage Illegitimacy Rates

First, let us take a quick look at what has been happening to rates of births to teenagers outside of marriage. These rates have tripled during the past 30 years. Between 1963 and 1973 they rose by 50 percent. About one percent of white adolescents between the ages of 15-19 had an illegitimate baby in 1973; this was true for almost ten percent of black ones. (Sklar and Berkov, 1974; Monthly Vital Statistics Reports, 1971; 1972; 1973).

The overall birth rate for teenagers declined somewhat after 1958, but this decline is not so sharp for adolescents as for older age groups. Considerably higher rates of out-of-marriage births have obtained for older groups in the past. In 1973, these rates were higher in the 20-29 year old age brackets than they were for adolescents. However, illegitimacy has been declining for older women since 1965 but this is not true for teenagers.

The rising rates of illegitimacy for adolescents, aged 16 and younger is of particular concern. As of 1973 they were over twice as high as those for older teenagers. (Campbell, 1976)

The illegitimacy birth ratio has been rising since 1963. In 1973, about 70 percent of babies born to black teenagers were illegitimate, 19 percent for whites.

One-third of all babies born to adolescents in 1973 were illegitimate. The greater proportion of these births were to young people who were unemployed, had relatively little education, came from low-income families, lived in the south and in rural non-farm or central city areas.

The great majority of teenagers today tend to keep their babies, rather than place them for adoption. (Sklar and Berkov, 1974).

To a considerable extent, rising illegitimacy among older teenagers is a result of declines in adolescent marriage rates over the past ten years or so. This decline applies mostly to females aged 18 and 19. The rate for those under 18 was consistently low between 1963 and 1973: about three percent during these years. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975)

Attitudes Toward Sexuality

Yankelovich (1974) conducted national youth attitude surveys in 1969 and 1974. He found a rising proportion of youth who wanted more sexual freedom. This desire increased markedly from 1969 to 1973. On virtually all survey items concerning sexual values, blue collar youth, by 1973, had accepted the liberal attitudes expressed by college youth in 1969; meanwhile higher proportions of college youth gave liberal responses in 1973 than in 1969. Specifically, in 1969, 43 percent of college youth and 22 percent of non-college said they would welcome more sex freedom. In 1973, these figures were 61 percent and 47 percent respectively.

In 1973, only 40 percent of college and 62 percent of non-college women said they thought having a child outside of marriage was wrong (comparable data for 1969 not available). Acceptance of abortion rose among college women between 1969 and 1973, but remained the same for non-college women during these years. By 1973, about half of the college group and two-thirds of the non-college said having abortion was morally wrong. Males were more likely than females to accept abortions; this is accord with their tendency to be more liberal on sex attitudes in general.

Interestingly, about 80 percent of both female groups expressed desires for having children someday, but only half of the college and two-thirds of the non-college women said they looked forward to being legally married. Moreover, only 35 percent of the college women and 50 percent of those not in college said that having children was an important <u>personal</u> value to them.

College women were especially likely to endorse the statement that females should be as free as males to take the initiative in sex relations (83 percent college; 67 percent non-college). In assessing the most important qualities in a man, the highest proportion of college women (over 60 percent) chose these items: concern with a woman's sexual satisfaction (80 percent) and able to satisfy a woman sexually (60 percent). The non-college women were similar on these items but also the majority thought men should be good providers, put family above everything else, and show women courtesy and respect. Less than half the college women thought these qualities were important.

The women, as a group, were not opposed to marriage or to being homemakers and self-sacrificing parents. Over two-thirds disagreed that marriage is becoming obsolete and over 80 percent thought homemaking and parenthood was as fullfilling as a job or career. The large majority also said that a woman did not have the right to put herself ahead of her obligations to her husband and children. Far more important than anything else was love (over 90 percent) and friendship (over 80 percent).

Almost as many men as women also placed emphasis on love: an equal proportion on friendship. Moreover, the majority of men thought marriage and having children was important and did not feel that marriage was becoming obsolete.

Attitudes vary by region and type of setting, again as might be expected. They tend to be more permissive on the east and west coasts than in the midwest or south and moreso in large universities than small colleges. Urban-rural data are not available.

Premarital petting and intercourse are generally viewed as being more acceptable in affectionate, committed relationships. This has been especially true of females, though their tendency to romanticize sex as being synonomous with love appears to be diminishing. This is particularly true of college groups. For example, in 1973 Yankelowich (1974) found that only 29 percent of college women and 41 percent of those not in college thought casual premarital sexual relations was morally wrong. (Male attitudes were not sharply different, though somewhat more permissive).

A number of other researchers have been studying adolescent attitudes toward sexuality since the early 1960's. In general, we find trends toward more permissiveness for virtually all forms of premarital sex behavior. Although males tend to be more liberal than females, as already noted, the differential between the sexes appears to be declining. Liberality also tends to increase with age and experience. In general, black adolescents appear to be more permissive than white ones; this is especially true of black males.

As might be expected, those young people who are strongly religious generally have less permissive sex attitudes than others. This is much truer for white, than black, teenagers, particularly males. It is hypothesized by Reiss (1967) that most so-called black churches are less apt than white ones to stress sexual morality; rather, they seek to give comfort and emotional support to their membership.

Both Yankelovich (1974) and Sorenson (1973) found that the majority of their respondents held that sexual behavior was not a moral decision, but rather a personal value: that anyone has the right to choose the behavior he or she wants so long as it is not exploitive and nobody gets hurt. (Just how one judges the finer nuances of psychological, as well as physical exploitation is another matter, as is the question of whether or not anybody gets hurt in a love-sex relationship, especially in the psychological sense).

Although there are many symptoms of a decline in the double standard in both attitudes and behavior, the above evidence as well as other findings suggest that it still lingers. For example Chilman (1976) and others have found that white college males say that virginity is not important in women, that women have a right to be as free in their sex behavior as men, but when asked who they expect to marry, they say they want a virgin or a woman who has had intercourse only with them. White college females perceive that men talk a liberal line but behave differently. However, few

of them expect to marry men who are still virgins or have had intercourse only with them.

It is an open question as to whether attitudes are influenced by peer groups or whether people seek friends with similar attitudes as their own values change. Probably both things happen. Although the evidence is somewhat tenuous, males seem to respond to pressures from their peer group more than females do and shift their sexual values to win group approval. Then, too, men are more likely than women to receive strong pressure from their peers for sexual adventuring.

However, women in liberal colleges and universities increasingly report pressure from their peers to engage in intercourse (Sarrel and Sarrel, 1974). They have long had pressure from their male friends to do so. Interestingly, in more conservative settings, at least one study shows that male attitudes tend to be more liberal than their behavior and female behavior more liberal than attitudes, but in more permissive climates attitudes and behavior tend to converge (Christiansen and Gregg, 1970).

Ladner's (1972) study in an inner city ghetto revealed that both boys and girls receive stimulation and pressure for sex activity from early childhood, on. She and others (Miller, 1974; Finkel and ~~Lubin~~ Finkel, 1975) find that premarital coitus is almost universal among black males by age 16. A number (Staples, 1971; Rainwater, 1970; Rosenberg and Bensman, 1968; ~~Lubin, 1967~~) find that poverty-level urban boys of both races are subjected to strong peer group pressure to prove their virility by "scoring" with a number of females.

Available evidence is somewhat scanty, but it suggests that the double standard is less entrenched among lower class blacks than other groups (Rosenberg and Bensman, 1968; Hammond and Ladner, 1968; Rainwater, 1966; Reiss, 1967). Virginity among females is less likely to be considered crucial; women tend to be viewed as having sex needs and capacities equal to those of men.

Premarital Sexual Behavior

During the 1960's, it was frequently claimed that, although sexual attitudes were becoming more liberal and less supportive of the double standard, sexual behavior was not changing much. (Cannon and Long, 1971). It was believed that the real sex revolution occurred in the 1920's when a sizeable proportion of middle and upper class women began to engage in premarital petting and intercourse. This tended to liberate the men, too, in giving them an opportunity for sexual intimacies with women of their same socio-economic level. Many scholars in the field stated that probably premarital heavy petting, but not intercourse, had increased between 1925 and 1965 or so. Chiefly, they thought, young people were simply becoming more accepting of, and honest about, their own behaviors and interests.

They were probably right in their conclusions until about 1967. A series of studies prior to that time showed that about 25 percent of college women and 55 percent of college men had had premarital intercourse and over half again as many had engaged in

light or heavy petting. However, a sharp and continuing increase in premarital intercourse apparently occurred in the late 1960's. By 1974, rates had probably doubled or tripled for females and risen by about 50 percent for males. (Data on high school age youngsters tend to be lacking before the 1960's).

Kantner and Zelnick (1972) have carried out the only thoroughly scientific study of the premarital coital behavior of a national probability sample of girls between the ages of 15 and 19. They found in 1971 that over forty percent of their 19 year olds said they had had premarital intercourse: 40 percent of whites and 80 percent of blacks. The data for white girls show twice as many non-virgins as reported in earlier research. The rates for black females were somewhat higher than earlier studies had found.

Other research of this period reports fairly similar findings. Recent studies of college women (Jessor and Jessor, 1972; Bauman and Wilson, 1974; Sarrel and Sarrel, 1974) suggest that the non-virginity rates are around 75 percent for seniors in large universities, rising from about 35 percent at the beginning of the freshman year. It is doubtful that college women are more sexually active than others, but we do not have behavioral data for non-college females above the age of 19. If the recent college data are accurate, the premarital intercourse rates are three times higher for senior college women that they were before the mid-sixties. For college men, we find the incidence of premarital sex rising from about 55 percent before 1968 or so to a probable 80 percent by 1974. (See figures 3 and 4)

Percentage of Reportedly Non-Virgin College Males
(Predominantly White) by Dates of Studies

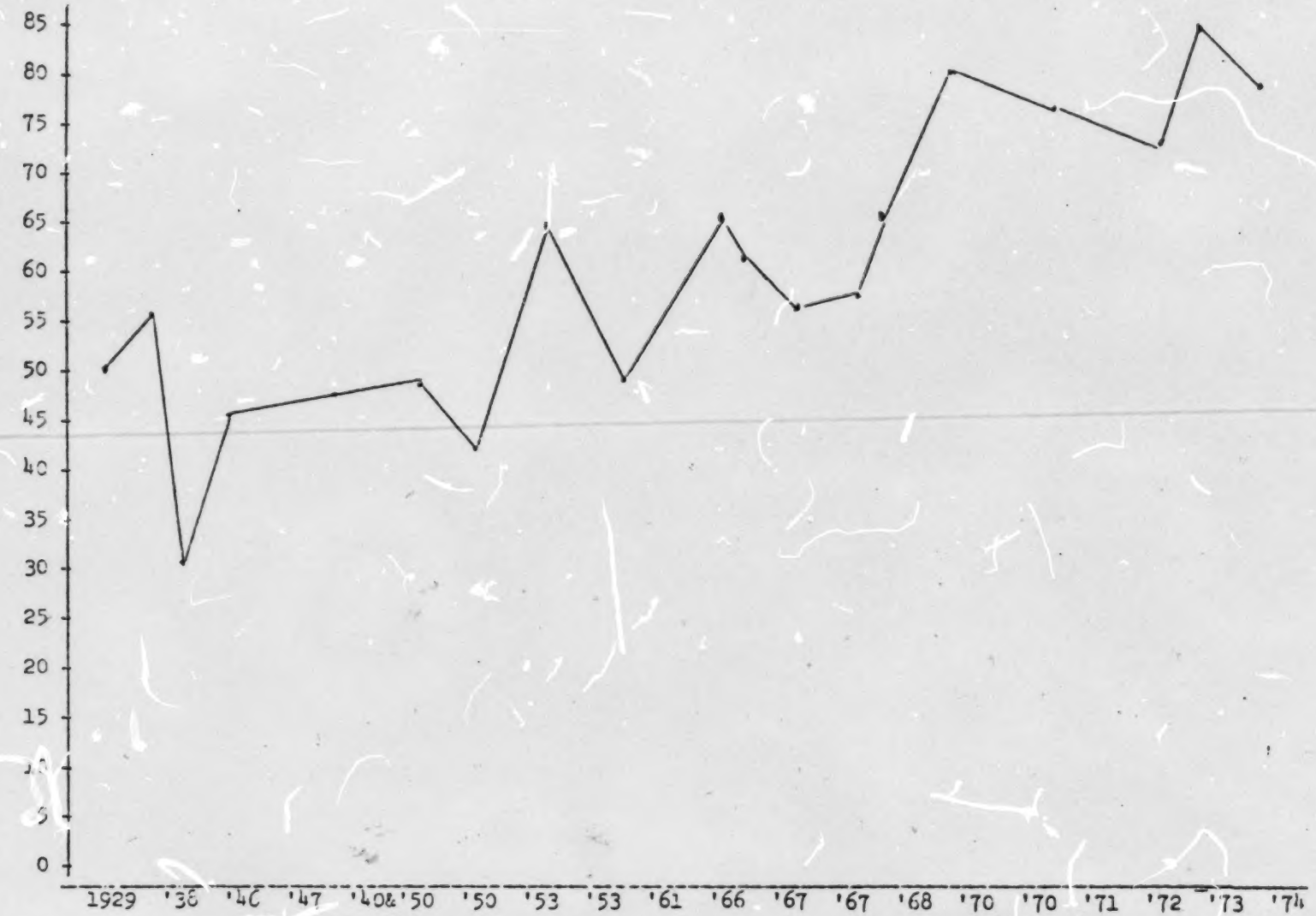








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Fig. 4

Percentage of College Females (Predominantly White) Females Reporting Non-Virgin Status, By Dates of Studies

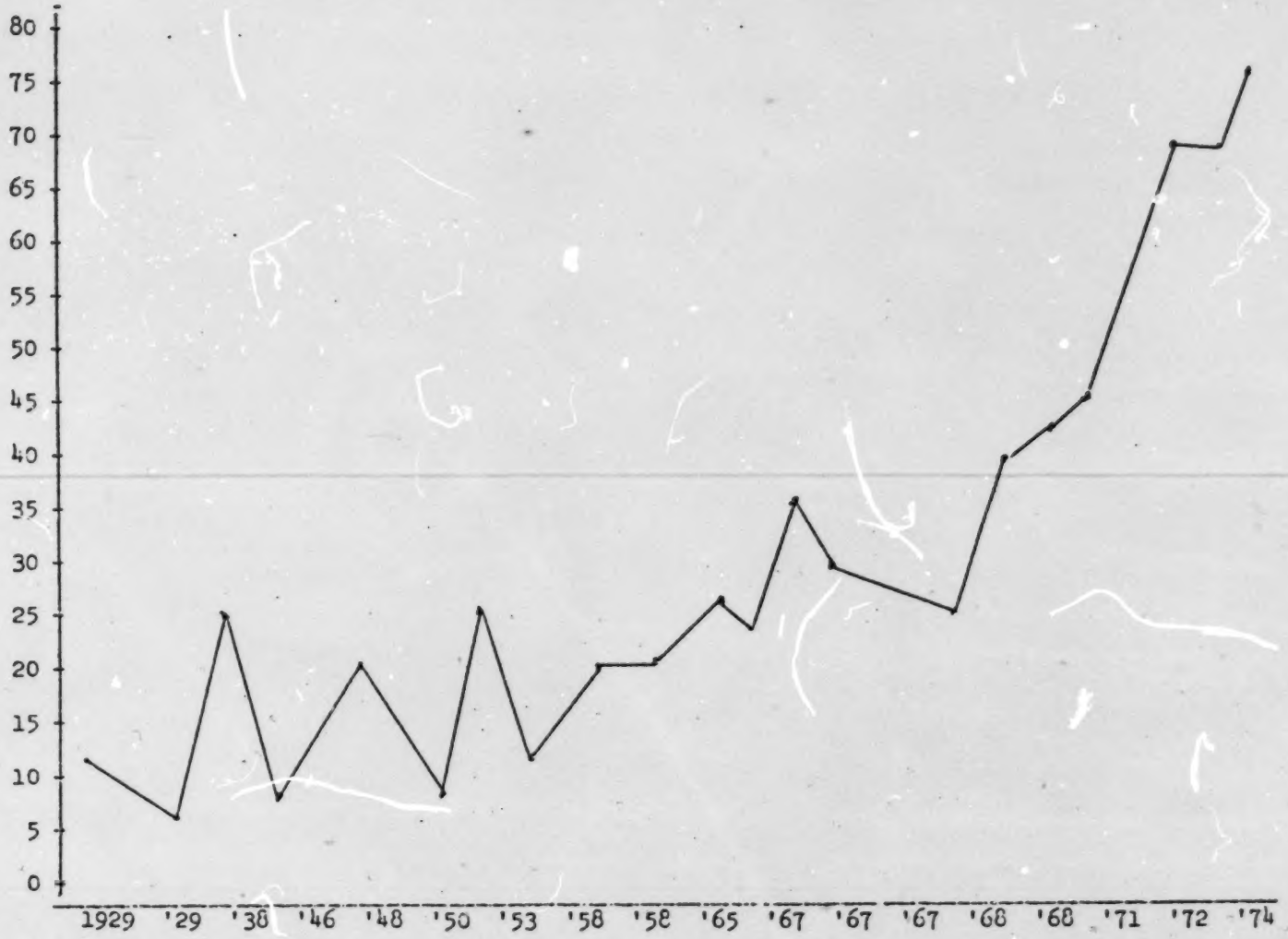








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Fig. 3

Table II. RESEARCH FINDINGS RE. THE PERCENTAGE INCIDENCE OF PREMARITAL INTERCOURSE AMONG MALE & FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS

| Study, Date & Sample | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|
| Davis, 1929 | |
| 1200 college level: age at study, 37; single | females - 11 |
| Hamilton, 1929 | |
| 100 college level: married at time of study | females - 7<br>males - 54 |
| Bromley & Britten, 1938 | |
| 541 males & 772 females: single ages 16-23 | females - 25<br>males - 51 |
| Peterson, 1938 | |
| 419 college students: males | males - 55 |
| Porterfield & Sally, 1946 | |
| 328 male college students & 285 males: single | females - 9<br>males - 32 |
| Finzer, 1947 | |
| 111 college students: single, 17-23 | males - 45 |
| Kinsey, 1940's & 50's | |
| college males & females | females - 20-27<br>males - 49 |

| Study, Date & Sample | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|
| Ross, 1950 | |
| 95 college students; single, 21 | males - 51 |
| Gilbert Youth Research, 1951 | |
| National sample: college 17-22 | females - 25<br>males - 56 |
| Landis & Landis, 1953 | |
| College: single & married 610 males & 1000 females | females - 9<br>males -41 |
| Ehrman, 1953 | |
| 274 single males, 18-21<br>50 single males, 19-24<br>408 single females, 18-21<br>In a southern university | females - 14<br>males - 68<br>males - 57 |
| Chilman, 1961 | |
| 50 single females<br>50 single males<br>(random sample, 18-21)<br>(median age, 18.5)<br>40 married males, 18-21<br>40 married females, 18-21<br>(random sample)<br>In a northeastern university | single females - 9<br>single males -46<br><br><br>married females-46<br>married males -72 |
| Mirande, 1966 | |
| Single undergraduate sociology students at a midwestern university | females - 23<br>males - 63 |
| Freedman, 1965 | |
| Random sample of Stanford University senior female students: white, mostly upper middle class | females : 22 |

| Study, Date & Sample | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|
| Robinson, King & Balswick, 1965 & '70 | |
| 129 males & 115 females (1965)<br>137 males & 158 females (1970)<br>representative samples from undergraduate social science class at large southern University | 1965<br>females - 28.7<br>males - 65.0<br>1970<br>females - 37.3<br>males - 65.0 |
| Kaats & ~~Gilbert~~ Davis, 1967 | |
| Survey in two intro. psychology courses | females - 41-44<br>males - 60 |
| Carns, 1967 | |
| Probability sample of 1177 students in Nation's non-religiously based colleges & Universities. Interview study ; adequate reliability stated | females - 32.2<br>males - 57.4 |
| Bell & Chaskes, 1958 & '68 | |
| Urban Penn. University: Matched samples | females: in dating relationship:<br>1958 - 10<br>1968 - 23<br>in steady relationship:<br>1958 - 15<br>1968 - 28 |
| Luckey & Nass, 1967 | |
| Survey of 21 nationally representative colleges & universities | females - 43.2<br>males - 58.2 |

Christensen & Gregg, 1970

Studies in '58 & '68 similar (same instrument & samples; 3 samples of college students: Mormon (Utah), midwest, & Danish, (later omitted here); mostly white

| Percent Females | | | Males | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1958 | 1968 | | 1958 | 1968 |
| 10 | 32 | (Utah) | 39 | 37 |
| 21 | 34 | (mid-west) | 51 | 50 |

| Study, Date & Sample | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|
| **Playboy Magazine, 1970** | |
| Survey of 7300 students from 200 colleges | females - 51<br>males - 81 |
| **Playboy Survey #2, 1971** | |
| Random sample of nationally representative colleges | females - 56<br>males - 77 |
| **Bauman & Wilson, 1968-1972** | |
| N.C. University, random sample of undergrads. single, white, native-born | 1968<br>females - 46<br>males - 56<br>1972<br>females - 73<br>males - 73 |
| **Jackson & Potkay, 1972** | |
| Random sample of females in dorms of college | females - 43 |
| **Jessor & Jessor, 1973** | |
| Random sample of college students in a Rocky Mountain Community - over 50% sample loss | females - 85* (college seniors)<br>males - 82* (college seniors) |

**Sarrel & Sarrel, 1974**

| 1973 study of 1200 Yale students Entering freshmen, sophomores, juniors & seniors | Percent Females | Males |
|---|---|---|
| | 25 | 33 |
| | 75 | 62 |

* When these same students were freshmen in 1970, 51 percent of the females and 46 percent of the males were, by self-report, non-virgins. By their sophomore year, this was true for 70 percent of the females and 65 percent of the males and by their junior year (in '72), these figures were 80 percent and 7[illegible] percent, respectively. Thus, from the freshman year, to the senior, rates for the female group increased by over 50 percent.

These data, interesting in themselves, as descriptive of change for groups of college students over time, also indicate the importance, in such studies, of delineating the age and college year of the group under consideration and the difficulty of comparing one study to another when these facts are unknown.

| Study, Date & Sample | Percentage of Group |
|---|---|
| Chilman, 1974 | |
| Random sample of white freshman students in a large urban Mid-west University (majority age 18) | females - 39<br>males - 50 |

These higher college rates, however, are complicated by the changing size and nature of the college population over the past ten years. The apparent rise in premarital intercourse for this group may be partially caused by the larger numbers of young people from low-income and minority backgrounds who now go on for higher education. Then, too, the waning popularity of early marriage would tend to boost the premarital intercourse rate for this age group. (See Table I).

The incidence of premarital heavy petting and intercourse also increased for high school age students after 1970, if not before. An important replication study by Vener and Stewart was carried out in 1970 and 1973 in a non-metropolitan Michigan high school. It shows a rise in non-virginity among high school girls over this time span: from 27 to 35 percent by their senior year (Vener and Stewart, 1974). Vener and Stewart's most striking findings were that statistically significant increases in heavy petting and coitus primarily occurred for both boys and girls at ages 14 and 15. Kantner and Zelnick (1972) also hypothesize a recent rise in premarital coitus rates for girls of this age.

All in all, according to a number of studies, premarital intercourse increased for white high school girls from about ten or 15 percent in the mid 1960's to about 35 percent by age 17 or 18 by 1973. (See Table I and Figures 1a and 1b).

For high school boys, the rate seems to have increased, although not so dramatically; from about 20 percent in the mid sixties and earlier, to 35-50 percent by 1973 or 1974. (See figure 2).

Table I. FINDINGS CONCERNING RATES OF PREMARITAL INTERCOURSE FOR WHITE MALE AND FEMALE TEENAGERS (AGES 12-19)

**Kinsey, 1938-1950**

Non-random sample: mainly northeast & north-central urban

FEMALES: WHITE - HIGH SCHOOL AGE

PERCENTAGE By education of subject

| By age | Total | 0-8 | 9-12 | College | 17+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 1 | 9 | 1 | -- | -- |
| 15 | 3 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 16 | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | |
| 19 | | | | | |
| 20 | 20 | 25 | 26 | 20 | 15 |

MALES: WHITE

Between ages 16 and 20 - 52.4

College bound - 10.0

Not-college bound - 75.0

Total - by age 20-- 76.7

**Gebhard, Pomeroy & Martin, 1938-1955**

Non-random sample, northern, urban, black women

Education: Percents

| Age | 8th gr. | High School | College |
|---|---|---|---|
| <15 | 62.0 | 48.0 | 8.0 |
| 20 | 82.0 | 82.0 | 49.0 |

No males included in study

**Lake, 1966-1967**

Non-random, national sample of 1500 females ages 13-20 (only 15 percent in college)

| Age | Percent |
|---|---|
| 15 | 6.0 |
| 16-17 | 13.0 |
| 18-19 | 25.0 |

No males included in study

Miller & Simon, 1967

Random sample: Illinois ages 14-17

College bound: 16.0
Not college bound: 39.0

Females

| Age | Percent |
|---|---|
| 13 | |
| 14 | |
| 15 | |
| 16 | 22.0 |
| 17 | |

Males: White

College bound: 16.0
Not college bound: 31.0

Total: 21.0

Udry, Bauman & Morris
1969-1970

Low-income area probability sample of 16 cities. Interviews for retrospective data with black & white females in birth cohorts by decades 1920-'29 - 1950-'59 and by occupational status of man who was household head when subjects were ages 10-14

Black Females

By age 17

Birth Cohorts

| Occupational Status | Percent |
|---|---|
| LOW | |
| 1920 - 1929 | 41.6 |
| 1930 - 1939 | 47.6 |
| 1940 - 1949 | 51.9 |
| 1950 - 1959 | 65.5 |
| HIGH | |
| 1920 - 1929 | 34.6 |
| 1930 - 1939 | 40.7 |
| 1940 - 1949 | 52.2 |
| 1950 - 1959 | 65.5 |

White Females

| | Percent |
|---|---|
| LOW | |
| 1920 - 1929 | 2.5 |
| 1930 - 1939 | 13.1 |
| 1940 - 1949 | 13.3 |
| 1950 - 1959 | 33.3 |
| HIGH | |
| 1920 - 1929 | 3.6 |
| 1930 - 1939 | 7.8 |
| 1940 - 1949 | 13.6 |
| 1950 - 1959 | 26.2 |

Males

no data for males

-20-

Furstenberg, 1967 data

Sample of predominantly black lower-income females attending a maternity clinic plus a matched group

(Mostly) Black Females

| Age | Percent |
|---|---|
| >20 | 72.0 |

25

26

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jessor & Jessor, 1972 | Females | | Males | |
| Random sample of high school students in a Rocky Mountain, small city (52% of original sample). | Age | Percent | | |
| | 13 | not available | | |
| | 14 | not available | | |
| | 15 (est.) | 26.0 | | 21.0 |
| | 16 (est.) | 40.0 | | 28.0 |
| | 17 (est.) | 55.0 | | 33.0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Miller, 1972 | Females | | Males |
| | Social Class: Percents | | |
| Junior & senior students in two San Francisco high schools, rates computed by s.e.s. (ages about 16-18) | Middle-class (mostly white) | Lower-class (races mixed) | not included in this study |
| | 58.0 | 48.0 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Hugh Playboy Magazine), 1972 | Females | | Males | |
| (retrospective data: national probability sample, with considerable sample loss) | Age | Percent | Age | Percent |
| | 17 | about 25.0 | 17 | about 50.0 (college-bound) |

Finkel & ~~Lubin~~ Finkel, 1974

Males in three high schools in large N.E. City

Females: None studied

Males

Race: Percents

| Ages | White | Black | Hispanic |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 6.0 | 45.9 | 23.3 |
| 13 | 12.44 | 60.7 | 32.75 |
| 14 | 23.67 | 74.0 | 49.78 |
| 15 | 35.67 | 78.7 | 68.68 |
| 16-17 | 48.00 | 84.0 | 75.00 |

Percent for all by age 16-17: 67.00

Cvetkovich & Grote, 1974-'75

Non-random sample of black and white male and females, ages 16-17; 2 cities: 1 town

| Percents Females | | Percents Males | |
|---|---|---|---|
| White | Black | White | Black |
| 36 | 63 | 51 | 92 |

Sorenson, 1972

| Partial national sample with many unknown biases | Females (Both races: white majority) Age | Percent | Males (both races: white majority) Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 12 | 3.15 | 9.69 |
| | 13 | 8.50 | 20.00 |
| | 14 | 14.50 | 30.00 |
| | 15 | 26.00 | 40.00 |
| | 16 | 35.00 | 49.00 |
| | 17 | 37.00 | 55.00 |
| | 18-19 | 45.00 | 57.00 |

Kantner & Zelnick, 1972: study in 1971

National probability sample of 4240 white & black females 14-19. Almost total sample reached & interviewed

| | Black Females | | | | White Females | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | <Poverty | >Poverty | All | Age | <Poverty | >Poverty | All |
| 15 | 13.8 | 34.1 | 30.2 | 32.2 | 15 | 12.6 | 10.7 | 10.8 |
| 16 | 21.2 | 53.9 | 37.2 | 46.4 | 16 | 18.3 | 17.0 | 17.5 |
| 17 | 26.6 | 60.0 | 48.7 | 57.0 | 17 | 22.2 | 22.4 | 21.7 |
| 18 | 37.1 | 64.4 | 81.2 | 80.8 | 18 | 26.4 | 36.1 | 35.5 |
| 19 | 46.1 | 82.4 | 81.2 | 80.8 | 19 | 38.6 | 41.5 | 40.4 |

Vener & Stewart, 1972 & 1974

Replication studies with large, similar populations & same instruments, 1970 & '73. Large sample non-metropolitan, Michigan area: 3 high schools in 1970; 1973, 1 in upper working class to upper middle class. Probably great majority of whites

| | Females School | | | Males School | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | A | B | C |
| 13 & less | 7 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 25 | 24 |
| 14 | 7 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 21 | 23 |
| 15 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 19 | 26 | 15 |
| 16 | 18 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 32 | 31 |
| 17 & more | 26 | 27 | 40 | 31 | 38 | 38 |

31 School A - Professional-Managerial community
School B - Lower middle & upper working class community
School C - Semi-Rural, working class

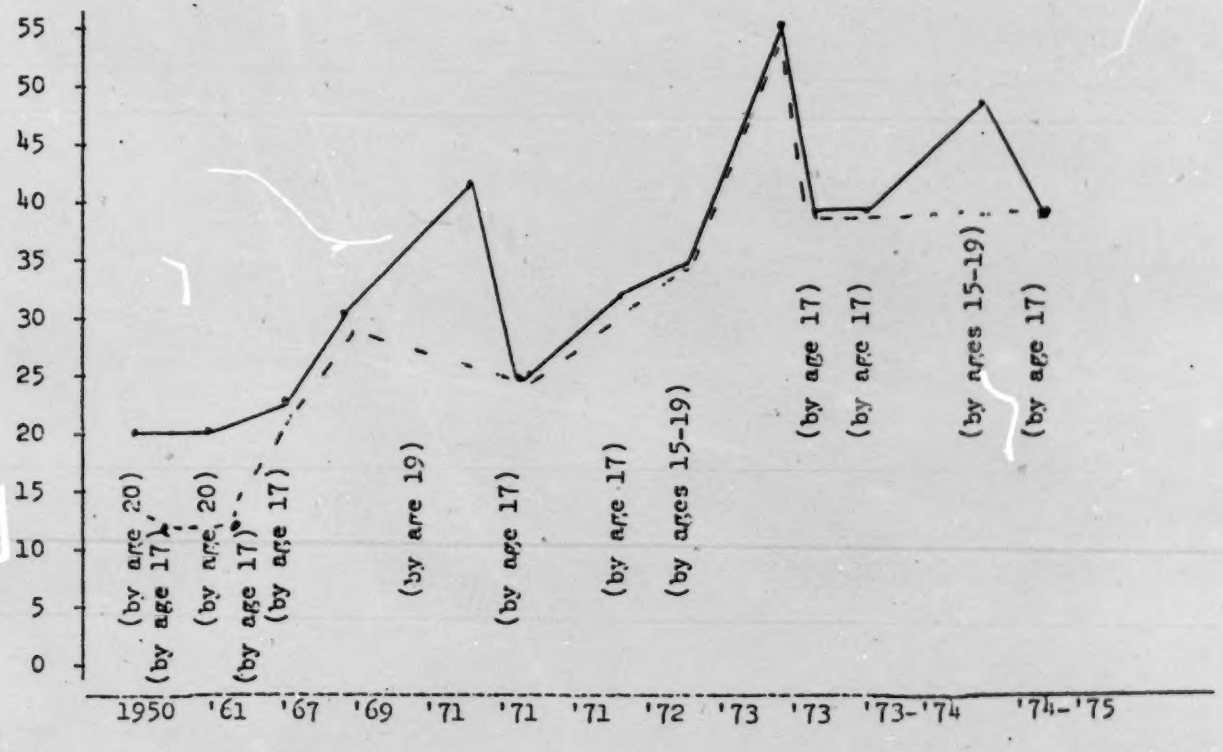
Rates of premarital coitus for school B: 1970 & 1973

| | 1970 | 1973 | 1970 | 1973 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 & less | 10 | 10 | 24 | 28 |
| 14 | 10 | 17 | 21 | 32 |
| 15 | 13 | 24 | 26 | 38 |
| 16 | 23 | 31 | 31 | 38 |
| 17 & more | 27 | 35 | 38 | 34 |



32

Percentage of White (or Predominantly White) High School Age Females
Who Were Self-Reported Non-Virgins by Dates of Study & Age Grouping






33

34

All Age Groupings

Percentage Non-Virgins by Age 17

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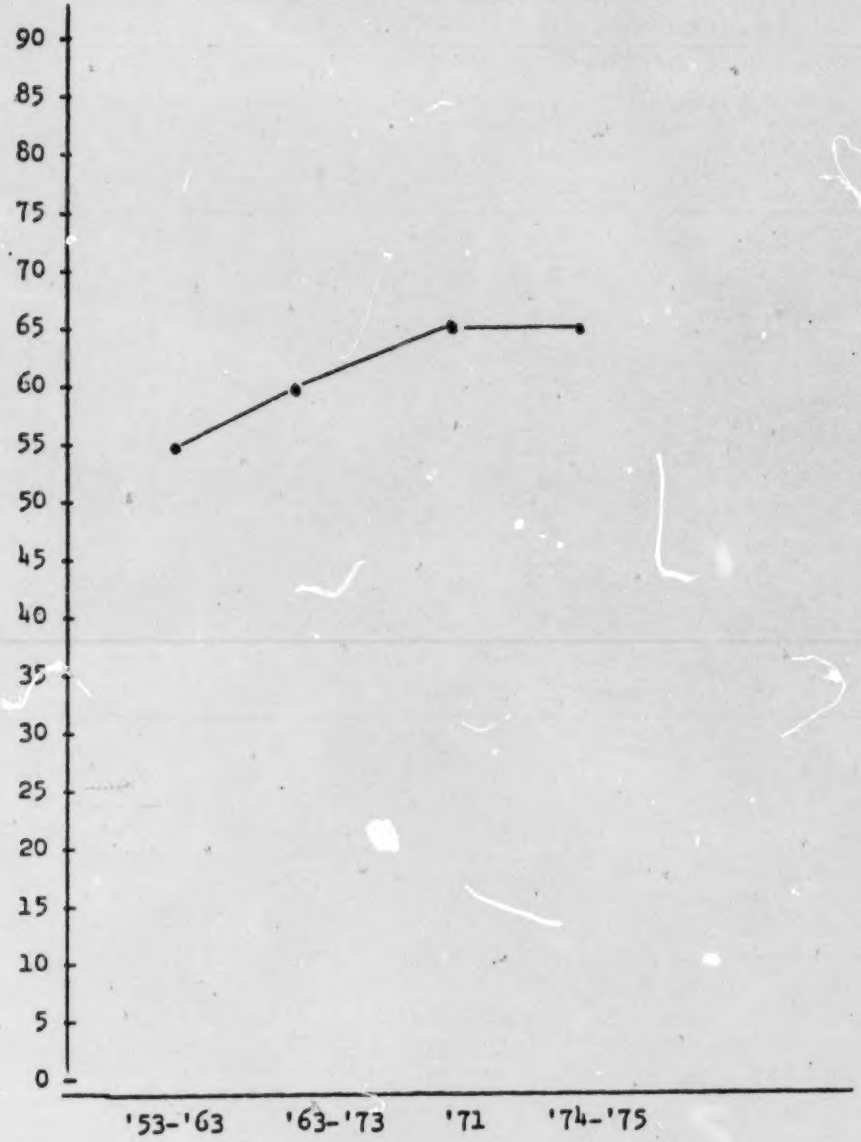
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee

Fig. 1a

Figure.1b Percentage of Black Seventeen Year Old Females Who Were Self-Reported Non-Virgins By Dates of Study & Age Grouping




(By age 17)







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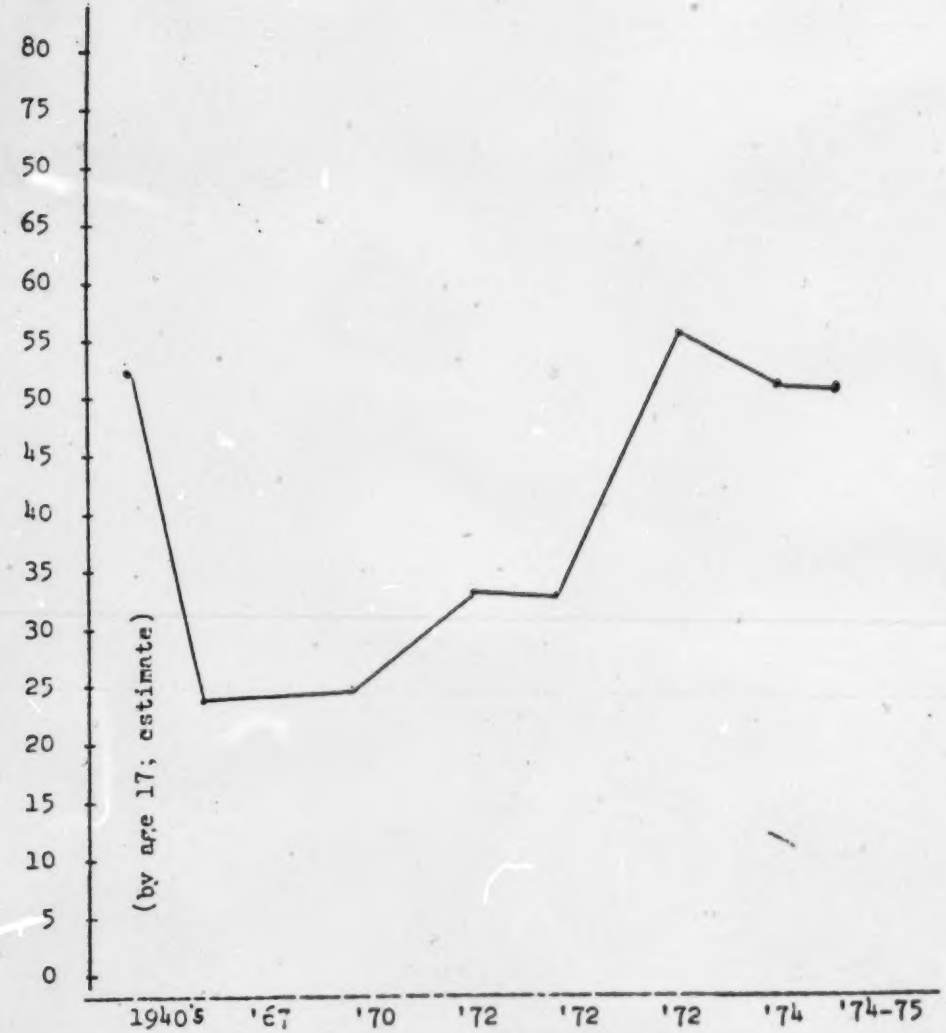
Percentage of White (or Predominantly White) High School Males
Who Were Self-Reported Non-Virgins at Age 17, By Dates of Studies




37

38

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Fig. 2

Importantly, the rates for males and females at both high school and college levels have become more alike in the past ten years or less. Before that time, males were about two and a half times more likely to be non-virgins than females of the same age. More recently their rates have become more nearly the same. Although the rates for both sexes have risen, the increase has been far more moderate for the boys and men. However, they are more likely than girls to become sexually active at age 13 or less.

The above findings do not necessarily mean that today's youth are promiscuous. Most tend to be monogamous, to believe that a sex relationship is best when it is combined with affection and at least temporary commitment, and that exploitive sex is wrong.

Kantner and Zelnick found that there were no regional differences, nationally, in respect to rates of premarital coitus. However, these rates were higher for females who had moved from farm to urban areas, especially if they were poor, black, and lived in the central city. Census data also reveal the high rates of family breakdown for this group.

A number of studies show the effects of religiosity on premarital sex behavior especially for girls (Kinsey, 1953; Jessor and Jessor, 1972; Chilman, 1976; Kantner and Zelnick, 1972). The more faithful the respondents are in religious observance, the less likely they are to have premarital coitus. These effects probably derive from conventional values of the subjects plus the teachings of the religion. The latter concept is supported by the findings that religiosity appears to have little impact on the sex

attitudes or behaviors of black adolescents (Reiss, 1967; Heltsey and Broderick, 1970). It has been suggested that this is because some predominantly black churches tend to put little emphasis on restrictive sex behavior, as previously mentionned.

At least a few studies show that the minority of young people who are promiscuous in their relationships tend to have little internalized guilt, are estranged from their parents, and, in the case of males, are particularly sensitive to the pressures of their same-sex peers to prove their virility through sexual adventuring (Sorenson, 1973; Kanin, 1969).

The Jessors (1972) have carried out an important longitudinal study that attempts to assess psycho-social factors associated with the transition from virginity to non-virginity. Especially in the case of high school students, a number of measures differentiated boys and girls who moved to non-virgin status. These measures include: values placed on independence, low-valuing and expectations of academic achievement, conflict with parents, friends who are deviant, and a general valuing and participation in deviant behavior. Deviant behavior includes the use of marijuana and alcohol. A number of other studies (Vener and Stewart, 1974, Luckey and Nass, 1973) also find an association between use of drugs and alcohol and permissive premarital sexual behavior.

The girls who moved to non-virginity in the Jessor and Jessor study showed even more changes than the boys. Along with the different measures mentionned above, they were more likely to see their parents as non-supportive and inconsistent, to be critical of society and its institutions, to feel the need of affection and to be low on religiosity. It seems likely that, because of traditional prohibitions of premarital intercourse for females, these non-virgin girls needed to be especially rebellious if they were to engage in premarital coitus.

Conflict with parents and lack of parental support and constant guidance is a fairly frequent theme in the research that studies the differences between sexually experienced and inexperienced adolescents. Confounding factors are probably operating. Some sexually active adolescents may be largely engaged in the normal push for independence from parents and a drive for psychosexual maturation. Others may be reflecting poor family relationships and child-rearing behaviors that are either too authoritarian or lenient. Other unstable or disturbed family situations come to mind. This is a large topic beyond the scope of the present paper.

A few studies seek to assess the relationship between feelings of self-esteem (or ego strength) and premarital sex behavior (Jessor and Jessor, 1972; Miller, 1974; Cvetkovich and Grote, 1976; Chilman, 1976; Komarosky, 1976).

The results are conflicting. For example, the Jessors found higher levels of self-esteem for non-virgin high school boys, but not for girls. Komarovsky found that senior men in college tended to feel inadequate if they were still virgins. Cvetkovich and Grote

found that non-virgin high school girls seemed to be more passive and compliant than the others.

These findings suggest the importance of age, gender and cultural norms as intervening variables. Others come to mind, including the nature of the sexual relationships, the numbers of partners, attitudes of parents, and so on. A few studies examine some of these variables and provide clues that persons who are promiscuous, superficial, or overly aggressive in their liasons are quite different psychologically from those who have more committed, long-term, monogamous relationships. This is what we would expect. Again, we are reminded that our research needs to look at sub-groups of adolescents in respect to their characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors rather than be content with averages derived solely from studies of large, undifferentiated samples.

Research findings are conflicting, especially for females, as to the effect of socio-economic status on premarital sex behavior. Few studies have investigated this topic: none of them satisfactorily. One needs to use a socio-economic index that takes into account the educational-occupational-income levels of both fathers and mothers because of the differing effects of both parents on boys and girls. Then, too, it is important to consider the effects of racism in combination with socio-economic level.

The available research findings suggest that socio-economic status has a clearer effect on the sex behavior of males than of females. In general, the lower the socio-economic status of males, the higher the incidence of premarital sex behavior appears to be, especially at age 13 or younger. Black males have the most permissive sexual attitudes and the highest rate of premarital coitus of any group. This is probably the result of the combined effects of severe poverty and racism. (Staples, 1971; Ladner, 1972; Vener and Stewart, 1974; Finkel and ~~Lubin,~~ Finkel 1974; Rainwater, 1970; Liebow, 1967).

Kantner and Zelnick (1972) and Miller (1974) found that white girls from high income families were somewhat more likely to have premarital intercourse by age 17 than other girls. However, Vener and Stewart (1972) found that girls from professional-managerial families were more apt to be virginal in high school than those from lower middle or working class back-grounds. It seems likely that a small group of girls from highly educated, avant garde families are more sexually liberated than other girls

but that, in general, sexual behavior may follow social class lines in the ways that Vener and Stewart found and as seems to be true for boys.

A striking finding was obtained by Kantner and Zelnick in respect to the sexual behavior of black teen-age girls. Those who came from families in which the father had graduated from college had premarital coitus rates similar to white girls of analogous families. Otherwise, rates for black girls were about twice that for whites and black girls also tended to become non-virgins at earlier ages.

Although the data re. the effects of socio-economic status of parents on the sex behavior of daughters are somewhat ambiguous, they are much clearer in respect to the effects of the educational levels of the girls, themselves.

Udry, Bauman and Morris (1975), in a recent study of samples of low income women in sixteen cities, found that achieved educational levels were negatively associated with non-virginity by age 17. For both white and black females, the lower the completed educational level, the more likely the girl was to have had intercourse before marriage. Others have obtained somewhat similar findings. (Gebhard et.al. 1958, Jessor and Jessor, 1972; Furstenberg, in press). We do not know which came first: low educational motivation and achievement that prompted the girl to look elsewhere for satisfaction, or sexual involvement with males that reduced interest in, and application to, academic matters. Probably these variables operated differently for different individuals.

The only research that provides a clue to educational goals

and achievement for boys and their sex behavior is provided by the Jessor and Jessor (1972) findings. As already mentioned, they learned that their sexually active boys, like the girls, put less value on education, expected achievement less, and had lower grade point averages than sexually inexperienced high school students.

Contraceptive Behavior

Of course, in the case of the girls, pregnancy may have intervened to interrupt their studies. This leads us to a consideration of contraceptive use and non-use by sexually active adolescents. We have no systematic research on this topic in respect to boys. The situation is better in the case of girls. We are especially indebted to Kantner and Zelnick (1973) for their careful national study on this topic.

They found that few sexually active girls between the ages of 15 and 19 consistently use contraceptives, although most use them at least part of the time. The condum is the method most frequently used by black couples (about one-third), although the use of "the pill" increases with age (over one-fourth). Withdrawal is the most popular method among younger white teen-agers (about one-third) but, as in the case of the blacks, the pill becomes more popular for older girls (one-fourth to one-third). The condum is also popular with the white group. Very few respondents report the use of other methods. The fairly extensive use of male methods is a surprising aspect of these findings, especially since so much more attention has been paid to promoting the use of contraceptives by females.

According to Kantner and Zelnick, the leading factors associated with non-use or sporadic use of contraceptives are: the belief of girls that they are unlikely to get pregnant, that they are sub-fecund; infrequency of intercourse; low income and education of parents; living at home rather than in a college dormitory or other independent arrangement; not being a college student; living in central cities and fringe non-metropolitan areas (for blacks, but not whites); lack of church attendance for blacks, but not for whites; opposition to abortion.

The general picture that emerges from these findings is fairly similar to that obtained by studies of contraceptive use and non-use, in general; people of low income status, who belong to oppressed minority groups, who have relatively little education, who are not upwardly mobile are less likely than others to consistently use effective contraceptives (Chilman, 1968). In respect to teen-agers, we add the findings that many think they are sub-fecund and have sex relations only sporadically. This perception of their sub-fecundity may be somewhat accurate for younger girls because females are unlikely to be fecund until a year or so after menarche. Their relative non-use of reliable contraceptive methods such as the pill or IUD also makes considerable sense if they are only having sex relations from time to time.

Other studies have attempted to learn more about the psycho-social factors associated with the inadequate contraceptive practise of most teen-agers. Limitations of space prevent an adequate treatment of this topic. Hypotheses abound. They include: ignorance, lack of adequate family planning services for

low self-esteem, fatalistic attitudes.
teen-agers,/the inability or unwillingness of adolescent girls to face the fact that they are having intercourse and need to take planful precautions, risk-taking attitudes and an adolescent sense of immunity to dangers, immature levels of cognitive development, value systems that make child-bearing acceptable
fear of contraceptives,
either within or outside of marriage,/lack of aspirations or hope for educational-vocational achievement, and so on. It is likely that different orders of physical, social, psychological and economic variables are operating differently for a number of sub-groups of teen-agers and that these sub-groups will need to be considered separately if we are to arrive at a knowledgeable understanding of this topic. Then, too, female contraceptive behavior is only half of the subject; this behavior probably varies according to the attitudes and values of their partners and the nature of the couple relationship. (See, for instance, the heavy reliance on male methods in the Kantner and Zelnick sample).

Earlier, we learned that about one percent of the white teenage girls and almost ten percent of black ones had babies out of marriage in 1973. However, we have also learned that about 30 percent of white girls and 60 percent of black ones, ages 15-19, had premarital coitus in that year. They must be doing something right because the rates of exposure far exceed the rates of pregnancy. (Kantner & Zelnick found that "only three out of ten sexually active girls did become pregnant in the year of their study.

Some get abortions, a few have miscarriages, some get married and, of course, some use contraceptives. Then, too, many have intercourse only infrequently. However, these findings

do tend to support the optimistic thought of many teenagers that "maybe I'll be lucky and not get pregnant". This is not to say that sexually active teenagers shouldn't use contraceptives; they should. But it does suggest that many girls who get pregnant outside of marriage are not much different from a lot of other girls who manage to escape this event.

It is important to note that, although over eight times as many black girls as white ones have illegitimate babies, only about twice as many have premarital coitus. Over twice as many blacks, as white, sexually active girls get pregnant (Kantner & Zelnick 1972). A good deal of the difference in illegitimate birth rates, then, is probably owing to these facts plus the far greater tendency of white girls to terminate their pregnancy by abortion or to marry in order to legitimize the baby. There is another factor to be considered. About one-fourth of black girls, compared to a much smaller number of white ones have their first menstruation before age 12. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1975). Thus, they reach fecundity at an earlier age and are fertile for a longer period during their teen years. Then, too, on the average, black girls become sexually active about one year earlier than white ones. This affords a longer teen-age period in which one or more out-of-marriage pregnancies can occur.

Social Trends and Adolescent Sex Behavior

Earlier, I showed that the sex behavior of adolescents became much more liberal during the late 1960's and into the 1970's. This was especially true for girls and young women. I

suggest that these changes were probably an outgrowth of other radical shifts in our society and its values. I cannot treat this subject adequately here, but only present a few ideas. Jessie Bernard has written that the late 1960's constituted a turning and tipping point in American society (Bernard 1973); that new norms become dominant and others were in the process of decay.

The women's liberation movement with its call for equal rights and roles for women was re-born at that time and grew rapidly in strength. This was one aspect of the "revolution of rising aspirations" on the part of minority groups in general: racial and ethnic minorities; the poor, youth, the aged, and the homosexual as well as women. This was a time when the WASP culture, puritanism and the traditional establishment lost much of its power. This was a time of the counter-culture, the Vietnam fiasco, the Watergate crisis and a growing distrust of all social institutions. This became a time of disillusionment with government and social reform, of turning from political activism to the cult of personal self-actualization. This became a time of cults, mysticism, and drug use-a time in which the perfect orgasm became the goal of millions of Americans and when pornography went public. This also became a time of falling marriage and birth rates, rising divorce rates, growing numbers of employed mothers of young children, experiments with alternate family life styles such as communes, cohabitation, cooperatives, group marriages and the like. (Chilman, 1974). This was a time when we experienced the strange economic development of both recession and inflation. In many ways, this society, like other

industrialized ones, seemed to fall apart in the late 1960's and on into the 1970's. Maybe it needed to because old norms, values, institutions were no longer workable in the face of basic technological change. It is an open question whether or not, in 1976, we are in the process of evolving a more coherent, stable, workable society than the old one that refuses to revive despite the efforts of bicentinnial and other nostalgic enthusiasts.

In the face of these changes, it is little wonder that more young people became involved in premarital sexual intimacies, that their attitudes became more permissive, more oriented toward personal choice, less accepting of the double standard, less enthusiastic about the traditional goals of marriage and parenthood. Probably their increasingly free sex behavior is not much different from that of older adults, but there seems to be little enthusiasm and research funding to explore this subject.

## Some Implications for Research: Substantive and Methodological

It appears that important changes have occurred in the sexual behavior and attitudes of adolescents during the past ten or fifteen years. Research questions might well revolve around: what is happening, why is it happening and what are the effects of these changes. I will first discuss substantive issues concerning these questions and later, some methodological ones. I will confine my remarks to research about pre-marital sexual development and behavior and omit the subjects of contraceptives and illegitimacy at this time.

### Substantive Issues

We have fairly good documentation about the adolescent sexual behavior of females in 1971, thanks to Kantner and Zelnick's (1972) large, national study.* It is welcome news that this study will be replicated in the near future since it will be important and interesting to know whether further changes have occurred in the past five years. It would be even more welcome if males were to be included in their survey.

We also have fairly good documentation about changes in youth attitudes about sex roles and behavior between 1969 and 1971, through the national surveys of Yankelovich. Another such survey is needed. It would be helpful to include both younger adolescents and older age groups in such a study. We can be grateful that Yankelovich questionned both males and females.

* Other national surveys of adolescent attitudes and sex behavior have been carried out but they are seriously lacking in methodological rigor.

Although trend data have their value, it is of greater importance to know why these trends are occurring. What biological, social, psychological and other variables are associated with engaging in premarital coitus at the various ages and stages of adolescent development? This is a much more difficult question. We are beginning to get some answers, especially from fairly recent studies which design their research, from the beginning, with a sophisticated theoretical framework. Much of the research has had a chiefly sociological orientation; we need more psychologists working in the field. Then, too, none of the studies reviewed asked the important question as to when puberty was reached, though we know this biological event has a sharp impact on the timing of adolescent sex behavior.

Research to date provides clues about some social and psychological factors associated with adolescent participation in premarital coitus. Some of the more intriging ones are listed here, with the suggestion that they be followed up with further research. Sexually active adolescents of high school age seem more likely than others to:

1. be in poor communication with parents
2. have low educational-vocational aspirations and be low achievers
3. be rebellious and non-traditional in attitude and more apt to use drugs and alcohol and engage in "deviant" behavior
4. perhaps, for girls, have more equalitarian sex role attitudes
5. be passive-dependent girls (evidence is conflicting)
6. have high self-esteem (boys); low self-esteem (girls) ; evidence is conflicting.
7. be manipulative, exploitive (boys) (evidence is conflicting)
8. engage in early dating, frequent dating, going steady
9. attend church seldom or not at all (this has been demonstrated so often, it may not need updating in further research)
10. be a rural-urban migrant
11. belong to a family of low socio-economic status: perhaps more for blacks, perhaps more so for males

12. associate with a sexually permissive peer group and be dependent on peer approval; perhaps especially for males

A few studies of promiscuous adolescents (especially males) indicates that they are more apt to have disturbed family relationships, feel insecure about themselves, be dependent on the approval of male peers, and have difficulty in establishing intimate relationships with the opposite sex. How true are these findings?

Premarital coitus can be carried out under many kinds of conditions, such as coitus in the context of a steady, committed relationship; coitus on casual dates; coitus with pick-ups; coitus with only one or several or many partners. Thus, whether or not a person has experienced premarital intercourse is not the only issue to be studied. These different kinds of behaviors have different causes and different effects on young people, as some of the research as well as clinical theories suggest.

Premarital petting is often over-looked in studies of adolescent sex behavior. However, if we are interested in the sexual development of young people, not just whether pregnancy might occur, then we should be interested in the levels of heterosexual intimacy they have reached. Some studies, such as those of Vener and Stewart do take this into account.

Following a similar line of reasoning, one also needs to learn more about the adolescent's total history of sexual development including parent-child relationships, parental attitudes and behaviors in respect to sexuality and sex roles, family size and structure, sexual experiences including sex play, masturbation, homosexuality, dating history.

Although there is well-established knowledge and theory that human behavior (including sex behavior) is based on the sum total of the person's life experience, much of the research makes no, or very little use, of this knowledge in the study design. The Kinsey tradition has affected much of the research in this field, with its primary focus on what specific sex acts people perform with very little consideration of why they perform them and what the consequences of these behaviors are. (Of course, earlier studies in the 1920's and 1930's did much the same kind of thing).

More recently, there seem to have been two major sources of funding for research about human behavior, the federal government with its concern about population problems and illegitimacy and publishing companies, such as Playboy Magazine that stand to reap lush profits from resulting publications. * Thus most of the research about human sexuality has concerned itself with either a kind of pseudo-scientific voyeurism or the practical problems of "preventing unwanted pregnancies". As a result, there is a tendency to forget that we are dealing with whole human beings whose sexuality (broadly defined) affects all personal and interpersonal aspects of their lives.

Thus, it can be seen that a focus on premarital coitus alone, or conditions of premarital coitus, or premarital petting as a prelude to coitus, or earlier specific sex behaviors all provide a too narrow framework for studying or thinking about adolescent sexuality. The clues, alone, that have emerged from research that

* Research by William Masters and Virginia Johnson, as well as that by John Money are exempted from this generalization.

seeks to learn more about the causes of non-virginity among some adolescents remind us that sexual behavior has its origins, functioning and consequences for whole human beings interacting with others and with the larger society. Even if we only want to learn about the causes and consequences of premarital intercourse among adolescents we need to take a broader and deeper approach than has been the case up to now.

The social, psychological and physical effects of premarital sex behavior of adolescents on their present life satisfactions and adjustment as well as their future development and life satisfactions constitutes an even more important research question and should also be considered in the broader manner suggested above. There is a tendency to take an overly specific, pragmatic view of the effects of adolescent sex behavior in terms of whether or not pregnancy, child-birth, marriage, or venereal disease occurs. While these questions are important, we also need to know whether and how premarital sexual activity affects many aspects of adolescent functioning and development, including cognitive, personality, moral, and interpersonal development. How do these effects vary for male and female adolescents at different ages and stages, adolescents from varying kinds of socio-economic, racial, and ethnic back-grounds? Almost nothing is known about these issues aside from a few in-depth studies with small samples of college youth. (Bardwick, 1971; Hendin, 1975; Komarosky, 1976).

What kinds of social, psychological and physical needs do today's adolescents and youth have in respect to their sexual development? A period of rapid change in sexual norms and values

must create problems for many of them and their families. Specific help with contraceptives and abortion is being offerred in many places, but is this enough? Sex education is being provided in many schools, but studies show that knowledge has little effect on sex and contraceptive behavior. Do a number of young people and their families need counseling help? If so, what kinds do they need and how useful might it be? It seems likely that few professionals is such fields as psychology, medicine, and social work are adequately prepared to deal with adolescent sexuality in the context of its meaning and expression in today's society.

Some Methodological Issues

Social and psychological research in the field of adolescent sexuality generally needs many methodological improvements in terms of design, sample selection, selection of instruments, and methods of statistical analysis.

Little of the research in this field starts with a coherent theory or, if it does, the theory is too narrow such as "peer groups influence sex behavior". Studies, such as those of Kantner and Zelnick, are based on a broader, but almost entirely sociological theory. As sketched above, we know that sexual behavior, like all human behavior, is affected by biological, social, and psychological variables. All of these need to be taken into account in the development of theory and research design. They either need to be controlled or considered simultaneously through multi-discipline research.

When we are looking for trend data, it is particularly useful to replicate studies at different points in time, as was true in

the Bell and Chaskes, Vener and Stewart, and Robinson, King and Balwick research.

Sample selection is obviously an important consideration. Only a few studies-those of Kantner and Zelnick (1972) and of Yankelovich (1973)-use an appropriate national probability sample. Of course, it is difficult to conduct national studies, especially on a subject such as adolescent sexual behavior. One remedy is to carry out simultaneous studies in different parts of the country (as in the case of the Cvetkovich and Grote project) or to replicate studies, especially the better ones such as those of Jessor and Jessor or of Vener and Stewart.

Samples of far too many studies include only females. The whole field of adolescent sex behavior, contraceptive use, abortion, and illegitimacy appears to be heavily affected by sexism on the part of the general public, professionals, and scientists in the various disciplines. Researchers, as well as others, are locked into age-old traditions that put the primary (often only) responsibility on females for the occurrence of sex behavior as well as pregnancy prevention and control, child-birth, and child care. Thus, they tend to overlook the study of males, yet we know that female sexual activity is highly dependent on male behaviors, as is contraceptive use.

We particularly know very little about the sexual development, attitudes and behaviors of black adolescent males, aside from a few anthropological studies in inner city ghettoes. Of course, there are almost no studies of either females or males from other minority groups, such as American Indians and Spanish-Americans.

Samples often fail to clearly delineate the ages of adolescents. It makes a great difference whether the adolescent is 12, 13, 14, or 15 and so on. Somewhat the same observation applies to youth, since age 19 seems to be a turning point in heterosexual development and premarital coitus becomes increasingly normative after that age.

Samples are poorly defined in respect to social class membership in all of the studies encountered, even though a small body of primarily anthropological research shows that socio-economic status has a strong effect on sexual attitudes and behaviors in the United States. None of the research reviewed adequately defined the socio-economic status of its subjects. If this were considered at all, subjects were classified as members of blue collar or middle class families. Much finer delineations are needed, such as lower-lower class, unskilled and semi-skilled working class, skilled working class and so on. More satisfactory social class indexes are needed that include education, occupation and income. We need to consider the education and occupation of the mother as well as the father because of the processes of identification of sons and daughters with both parents.

Race and socio-economic level has to be considered together because many characteristics that appear to be racial are at least as much a result of social status as they are of race.

Because the sex behavior of white and black adolescents appears to be so different the two races should always be considered separately, together with concomitant consideration of social class, as mentionned above.

Rural-urban and regional residence, together with migration

experience makes a difference in sex behavior; this, too should be considered in sample selection and description.

Since all of the above variables need to be considered in sample selection, this implies that either samples need to be very large or that a purposive sample be selected on the basis of the underlying theory and the questions to be asked.

Of course, due attention needs to be paid to the randomness of sample selection and sample shrinkage. Although this seems elementary, the majority of studies reviewed had samples drawn from a few high school or college classes. When sample shrinkage was mentionned, it was often as high as 50 percent yet this seemed to give the investigators little pause when they reported their results.

These reports more frequently than not use only numbers and percentages to present findings and proceed from there to talk about differences between groups. While this is not too disturbing with very large probability samples, it is unfortunate when only small, non-random samples are used.

Few studies use multiple regression or similar multivariate techniques in order to learn the contribution of a number of factors to the issue under consideration.

If it is agreed that it is important to take a larger, more humane view of the sexual development and behavior of adolescents, we particularly need to improve the quality and expand the scope of research instruments used. Many questionnaires have been constructed to inquire about the sex behavior, knowledge and attitudes of adolescents and youth. So far as can be discerned, rarely do the investigators concern themselves about issues of

reliability and validity. It appears that they fail to build on the research of others and apparently never use the same instrument. Clearly, this prevents the building of a more general body of knowledge.

It is recommended that further studies of adolescent sex behavior use many of the same items as those employed in the Kantner and Zelnick national study of females, ages 15-19.

Theirs is a careful, valuable study and could profitably be extended to younger adolescents, youth and males at all stages of adolescent and youth development.

A number of the investigations seek to assess such personality variables as self-concept, self-esteem, passivity, aggression, anxiety, masculinity, femininity, cognition, impulsivity, and so on. With a very few exceptions, they fail to use standarized psychological measures already available. This seems to be a deplorable state of affairs. One reason is that few psychologists have concerned themselves with this topic.

A variety of study types are indicated. Some might well be interview and questionnaire surveys, such as those of Kantner and Zelnick. Others might be fairly formal, structured, and oriented toward testing a specific theory. We also need somewhat open-ended, in-depth clinical studies that use both intensive interviews and appropriate tests that seek to understand more about the adolescent as a whole human being who feels as well as thinks, values and behaves. The Bardwick study of a small sample of sexually active University women is a model for this kind of

research (Bardwick, 1973) Another model might be that of Keller, Crawford, Sims and Henry (1970) in their study of the psychology of contraceptive behavior of low-income black couples.

And speaking of couples, studies need to look at the interpersonal behavior of adolescent pairs, partly through interviewing them together. This also suggests observational and interview studies of adolescents in the family setting and with their peers, as in social events and in school. In general, more attention needs to be paid to the attitudes, feelings and behavior of parents in respect to the sexual development of their children and adolescents. We need to ask the parents about this as well as the adolescent perception of parents.

Since we are interested in the development of the adolescent as a sexual person, more longitudinal studies are needed. The work of Jessor and Jessor is valuable in this respect, as they are studying a group of males and females from the first year of high school and on through college as the young people make the transition from "non-virginity to virginity".

We are familiar with the many problems inherent in longitudinal studies. The usual prescription for gathering retrospective data and carrying out cross-sectional studies also has well-known problems. However, well-designed research of this kind certainly should help us gain useful information about the very incompletely understood, but important, topic of adolescent sexual development.

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